

REMARKS

The examiner has objected to the phrase "the or each valve arrangement" at claim 49, lines 7-8 as lacking antecedent basis. Applicant respectfully disagrees but has nevertheless amended claim 49 to refer to "the valve arrangement or each valve arrangement." Claim 49 recites that the valve means comprises at least one valve arrangement, and this wording covers two possibilities: one valve arrangement and multiple valve arrangements. The first possibility (one valve arrangement) provides antecedent basis for "the valve arrangement" whereas the second possibility (multiple valve arrangements) provides appropriate antecedent basis for "each valve arrangement."

The examiner has suggested that the indefinite article "An" at the beginning of the dependent claims 50-66 and 68-73 should be changed to --The-- for the sake of antecedent basis. Applicant respectfully disagrees. Antecedent basis considerations favor use of "a" instead of "the" when the noun to which the article relates has not been previously been recited, but this is not the issue with regard to the appropriate article at the beginning of a dependent claim. Use of "The" at the beginning of claim 50, for example, would imply that there is only one apparatus in accordance with claim 49 and this would beg the question, Which apparatus? This would almost inevitably lead to the conclusion that "The apparatus" is the apparatus that is described with reference to FIGS. 1-4 but it is not applicant's intent to limit protection to just one embodiment of the invention. Accordingly, applicant prefers to retain the indefinite article at the beginning of the dependent claims.

It is believed that the other amendments fully address the examiner's specific objections to the claims and that the application is therefore now in condition for allowance.

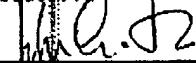
Respectfully submitted,

  
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